

another said i know a man who talked to a fellow  
who was minding his own business when one day a flying  
saucer  
landed beside him and a deep voice said get in he got in  
there was just a microphone there  
the spaceship flew him to washington and back in eleven  
minutes

i said where is the fellow now  
nobody knew

thats nothing said another did you know that our  
scientists  
have invented antigravity machines that can go to space  
and back in minutes only theyre just about two or three  
feet wide  
not big enough to hold a man

i said have you seen one  
no he said

when we went home i said to my wife arline  
how much of that stuff do you believe none really she  
said  
i said i never heard such a lot of phony stories myself  
driving carefully through the traffic of angels and  
unicorns  
some of whom had been drinking.

charles fort

out of the somewhere a rain of blood  
dripped for days on the dry earth while indoors  
with shades drawn  
sat seven scientists  
in weighty debate on its impossibility

poor peasants watched in wonder  
the great bird on the moon or else  
its visible shadow, while in conference  
sat seventy sages  
calculating copernican cycles

toads and crabs and chunks of ice  
were released entirely at random  
from the afterports of the great spaceship  
while seven hundred savants  
predicted tomorrows weather

looking up and down and even sometimes  
forward and backward charles fort  
with one foot in tomorrow a hand  
in yesterday  
went outside.

the only man in the neighborhood

i was going to have a picnic  
in kennedy national park  
i buckled the seatbelts  
and strapped in the basket securely  
not wanting to lose it on the way

drive carefully arline shouted  
from the laboratory door  
back tonight dear i replied

i started the starter threw in the clutch  
put the old girl in gear while  
glancing in the rearview mirror  
and off i went to 1997

i am the only man in the neighborhood  
with a chevrolet supersport time machine.

-- Norman H. Russell

Storm Lake, Iowa

### A Really Sound Project

The suggestion was a good one,  
but the stone was too heavy.  
Your red cape trailed in the mud,  
caught in my heel.

The old men didn't like it much,  
spat and swore like nothing  
we had ever seen or heard before,  
pointing their guns at us.

A joke or two will calm them,  
we'll tell them funny stories,  
I said. I screamed at them,  
Have you heard this one?